

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 12166 091633Z

70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 DHA-02 MCT-01 /074 W

----- 043560

R 091545Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6894

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12166

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT EG

SUBJECT: DARB AL-AHMAR INCIDENT

REF: CAIRO 12078

1. DURING CONVERSATION ON OTHER SUBJECT SEPTEMBER 9, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, GENERAL MUSTAFA EL-SHEIKH, TOLD POLCOUNS DARB AL-AHMAR INCIDENT ON SEPTEMBER 6 (REFTEL) HAD NO POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. HE SAID ALTERCATION HAD TAKEN PLACE IN MID-AFTERNOON BETWEEN MAN AND POLICE AND STATION CHIEF HAD HIT MAN FROM THE QUARTER ON THE SIDE OF THE NECK. UNFORTUNATELY, MAN HAD HAD TWO PREVIOUS HEART ATTACKS AND SUFFERED A FATAL ONE AS RESULT OF BEING STRUCK. (THIS CONFIRMS AKHBAR STORY SETPEMBER 8 THAT POLICE CONSTABLE ARRESTED ON CHARGE OF BEATING A CITIZEN WHICH LED TO HIS DEATH). OTHER PERSON INVOLVED HAD LEFT POLICE STATION AND SPREAD THE WORD IN THE QUARTER. BY LATER AFTERNOON LARGE CROWD HAD GATHERED AND SET FIRE TO POLICE STATION AND DID CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE TO VEHICLES AND BUILDING WITH STONES. EL-SHEIKH SAID DARB AL-AHMAR QUARTER IS ONE OF CAIRO'S MOST CONGESTED AND CRIME-RIDDEN SLUMS AND IT NOT SURPRISING THAT INHABITANTS RESENT POLICE.

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 12166 091633Z

GENERAL EL-SHEIKH CONFIRMED THAT MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAD

SENT REINFORCEMENTS AND THAT OVER 50 POLICE HAD BEEN INJURED. HE PERSONALLY HAD DIRECTED THE OPERATION FROM 7:00 PM UNTIL EARLY HOURS OF SEPTMBER 8; 104 PERSONS WERE ARRESTED, MAINLY MALE YOUTHS. YOUTHS HAD BEEN OR SOON WOULD BE RELEASED AND GENERAL EXPECTED ONLY FOUR PERSONS TO BE SENTENCED TO PRISON.

2. AN EGYPTIAN EYEWITNESS TOLD EMBOFF THAT CROWD HAD NUMBERED IN THOUSANDS AND HAD BEEN IN PARTICULARLY UGLY MOOD. EGYPTIAN ALSO CLAIMED EIGHT PERSONS HAD BEEN KILLED.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NO ONE HAS SUGGESTED THAT DEMONSTRATION WAS PLANNED ORGANIZED BY ANY GROUP, IT HAS OBVIOUS POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS. FACT THAT SUCH LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONS REACTED SPONTANEOUSLY AND VENTED THEIR ANGER AND FRUSTRATION ON POLICE IS OMINOUS SIGN. ONE CAN ONLY ASK HOW DIFFICULT IT WOULD BE FOR COMMUNIST OR OTHER SUBVERSIVE GROUPS TO EXPOLIT FRUSTRATIONS AND FEARS OF MASS OF CAIRO SLUM DWELLERS TO SERVE THEIR OWN PURPOSES.
MATTHEWS

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